

## SUDAN Food Security Outlook

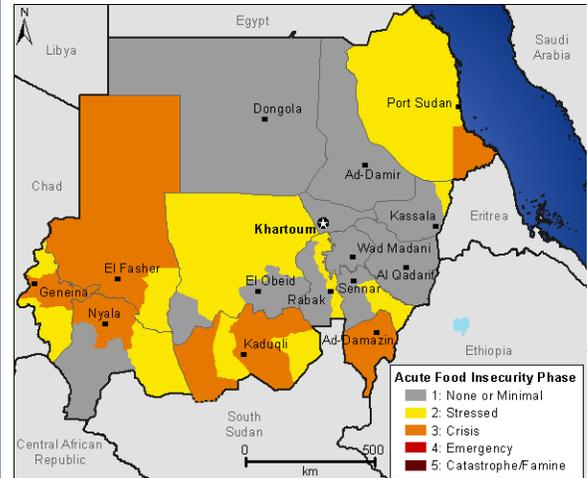
October 2011 to March 2012

### Conflict and expected poor harvest likely to result in emergency levels of food insecurity

#### Key messages

- About four million people currently face Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of food insecurity. Food insecurity is driven by conflict in Blue Nile, South Kordofan, Darfur, and Abeyi; ongoing lean season (May-September) food shortages; poor rainfall in many areas of the country; and high food prices due to inflation and local currency devaluation.
- Due to the late start of rains, crops remain at the vegetative growth stage at a time when they would typically be flowering. Full crop ripening would require continued rainfall through October. Typically, rainfall ends in September in most parts of Sudan except for the far southern areas. Even with rains through October, crop production will be significantly below normal. As of late October, some late-planted crops are reportedly wilting in drought-affected areas.
- Poor crop development has been exacerbated by intense fighting between SAF and SPLA-N in some of the main production areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile that forced farmers to flee their farms during cultivation. With increased mobility during the approaching dry season, fighting will likely intensify in both areas. The conflict can cause additional displacement, hinder harvests, limit agricultural labor opportunities, restrict access by humanitarian agencies, and disrupt seasonal nomadic movement.
- The harvests will provide some short-lived food security improvements in parts of Darfur, White Nile, North Kordofan, and Sennar states, bringing conditions to Minimal food insecurity (IPC Phase 1) and Stressed levels. However, as harvested crops are exhausted and food prices rise, conditions in these areas will deteriorate to Stressed and Crisis levels by March, as the lean season is expected to start early, i.e., in March/April instead of May/June. In conflict-affected areas of Blue Nile, South Kordofan, Darfur, and Abeyi, food insecurity is not likely to improve through the end of the year. If limits on humanitarian access and food access continue, parts of Blue Nile and South Kordofan could reach Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels of food insecurity in early 2012.

**Figure 1. Current estimated food security outcomes, October 2011**



For more information on the IPC Acute Food Insecurity Reference Table, please see: [www.fews.net/foodinsecurityscale](http://www.fews.net/foodinsecurityscale).

#### Seasonal calendar and critical events



Source: FEWS NET

**Most likely food security scenario (October 2011 – March 2012)**

As of October, an estimated four million people in Sudan are food insecure:

- In **Darfur**, the majority of the two million IDPs are in Crisis and about 300,000 – 400,000 resident/host communities in the drought-affected areas of Darfur are Stressed.
- Most of the 400,000 –500,000 conflict-affected/displaced people in **Blue Nile State** are in Crisis, while about 300,000–400,000 conflict-affected/displaced people in **South Kordofan** are also in Crisis.
- In **Red Sea State**, about 300,000 people face Stressed to Crisis levels of food insecurity.
- About 500,000 people in the drought-prone areas of **North Kordofan, White Nile, and Kassala** states are Stressed.
- Most of the 110,000 – 120,000 people displaced from **Abeyi** to various locations in South Sudan (e.g. Warrap, Unity and Bahr el Ghazal states) are in Crisis.

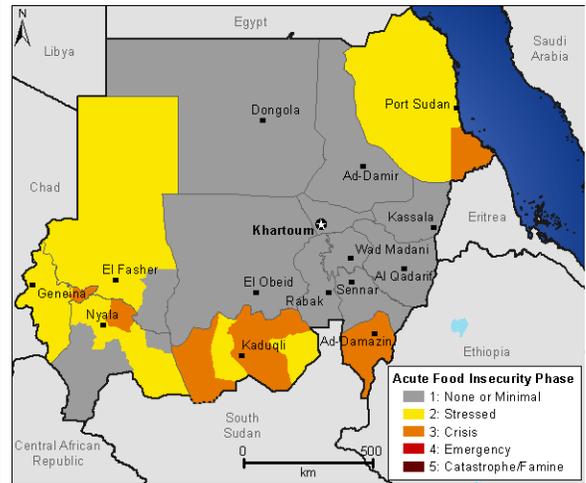
Rains started more than 30 days late in the east and central “grain basket” areas of Sudan (August instead of June/July), and there were prolonged dry spells in many areas during the critical planting season (June/July). Although rains improved in terms of total precipitation and distribution in August through the end of September, total cumulative rainfall as of early October was 25-70 percent of average, with the most serious rainfall deficits in parts of Blue Nile, Gedaref, Kassala, Sennar, and South Kordofan states.

The fighting in some of the main production areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile forced many farmers to flee their farms during the cultivation season. Insecurity in Darfur also affected cultivation. Consequently, the total area planted this year is estimated to be far below normal, especially in the conflict-affected areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, where less than 60 percent of the typical area was planted this year. As of the third week of October, late cultivated crops in drought prone areas have started wilting, which is an additional setback for the poor start to the agricultural season. A pest outbreak (grasshoppers, birds, head-worms and beetles) has been reported in Darfur, White Nile and North Kordofan states, which is expected to cause considerable damage to well-established crops in these areas.

By the end of September, planted crops are typically at late vegetative growth stage and by October they complete the full ripening. Given the late start of the rains, this year good rainfall through October is needed to complete ripening. The ECMWF and ICPAC outlooks call for above-normal rainfall through October. Regardless of rainfall performance through October, crop production is likely to be significantly below normal this season. This is likely to extend the current lean season up to November (farmers can typically start to consume crops in October) and delay the harvest until November. Continued fighting will also likely affect the harvest activities in Blue Nile and South Kordofan states, further reducing the season’s output.

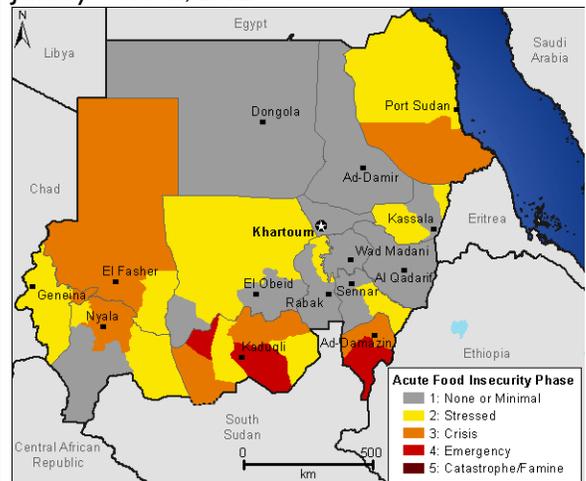
The macroeconomic situation in the country is unstable given the recent separation of South Sudan in July 2011. Over 70 percent of the crude oil that was produced in Sudan before separation was derived from South Sudan, and oil revenues were shared equally. Following separation, Sudan has lost over 70 percent of oil production. The remaining 25-30 percent can only meet domestic consumption, leaving nothing to export. This results in a decline in foreign currency reserves and a

**Figure 2. Most likely food security outcomes, October – December 2011**



Source: FEWS NET

**Figure 3. Most likely food security outcomes, January – March, 2012**



Source: FEWS NET

devaluation of the local currency. As the value of the Sudanese pound falls, prices for locally produced and imported food and non-food items have increased in nominal, local currency terms. The fall in the official exchange rate may mask the actual fall in purchasing power, as many traders rely on black market exchange to acquire foreign currency to fund imports, and unofficial, black market exchange rates are as much as 40-50 percent above the official Bank of Sudan rate.

**The most likely scenario for October 2011 through March 2012 is based on the following major assumptions:**

- The 2011/2012 harvest is delayed to November-January and production is far below average, due to below-average precipitation, a late start to the rains, the impacts of conflict on planting and harvesting, and localized pest infestations (in Darfur, White Nile, and North Kordofan). Stocks are expected to be exhausted by March/April.
- Cereal prices remain stable during the harvest period, but above the five-year average, due to low production, high inflation, and the local currency devaluation. Prices will rise early during the post-harvest period (January to March 2012), hampering access to food from the market for poor households during the scenario period.
- High inflation driven by increases in food prices and the local currency devaluation continues throughout the scenario period, particularly in conflict-affected areas.
- Conflict escalates with the increased mobility provided by the dry season, particularly in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states. Fighting causes additional displacement, disrupts harvests, limits agricultural labor opportunities, and reduces seasonal nomadic movement.
- Restricted access by humanitarian agencies in conflict-affected areas of Blue Nile and South Kordofan continues.
- The Government of South Sudan closes the border with Sudan beginning in December to restrict herder movements into the south for grazing. Lack of access to grazing in South Sudan will increase the risk of conflict between nomadic tribes and sedentary farming communities in Sudan and increase tension along the border of Sudan and South Sudan.
- Per the recent agreement reached between Sudan and South Sudan to open 10 border points for trade, trade flows to South Sudan are expected to resume during the scenario period, though at a lower volume than before separation. This could strengthen demands for cereal and push prices further up in Sudan.

Though the harvests will provide some short-lived food security improvements to Minimal food insecurity (IPC Phase 1) and Stressed levels in parts of Darfur, White Nile, North Kordofan and Sennar states, conditions in these areas will deteriorate to Stressed and Crisis levels during the January to March period, as poor harvests are exhausted and food prices rise. The lean season is expected to start early, in March/April instead of May/June. In conflict-affected areas of Blue Nile, South Kordofan, Darfur, and Abeyi, food insecurity is not likely to bring meaningful improvements through the end of the year. If limits on humanitarian access and food access continue, Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels of food insecurity are expected in parts of Blue Nile and South Kordofan in early 2012. The following sections provide more detail on anticipated food security outcomes in the areas of greatest concern during the Outlook period.

### **South Kordofan**

An estimated 400,000 people were directly affected or displaced by fighting between SAF and SPLA-N in South Kordofan that began in June 2011. By the end of September, the fighting spread to 12 out of the 19 localities in the state. Little is known about the SPLA-N controlled areas (e.g. Kouda, Delami, Talodi, and Heiban localities), which remain inaccessible for assessment. Fighting began during the peak of the planting season, and by mid-August, only 40 percent of the total area in South Kordofan was planted due to insecurity and the late rains (in some areas, such as Delami locality, less than 30 percent of the area was planted). In normal years, South Kordofan contributes up to 13 percent and 5.4 percent of national sorghum and millet production, respectively.

The fighting is expected to have major impacts on the food security status of the IDP populations who are currently both in and outside of South Kordofan and the nomadic pastoralist populations.

*IDP populations*

The precise number of IDPs is unknown due to continued fighting, restricted movement of humanitarian agencies and widespread minefields. In addition, the Government of Sudan has indicated that it will not allow IDP camps, such as those in Darfur. However there are several reports on IDP populations. The Sudanese Red Crescent (SRC) has reported registration of 35,000 IDPs in Khartoum from South Kordofan. UNHCR has reported about 12,000 refugees from South Kordofan in Pariang and Bentiu payams in Unity State of South Sudan. A joint SRC and government assessment in Rashad and Abu Gebeiha localities in South Kordofan registered 13,340 IDPs who fled from Talodi locality, one of the most conflict-affected areas in the state. There are also reportedly 12,000 IDPs in Talodi, most of whom were displaced during the last week in September. An unknown number of IDPs have been hiding in the caves of the Nuba Mountains. The food security conditions of these populations are of particular concern due to lack of access by humanitarian agencies. Most of the displaced from Kadugli and Dilling towns have not returned, and new displacement continues from these areas.

Many IDPs were forced to flee to isolated areas without their productive assets (including livestock) and food stocks. These households now depend on the support of host communities and/or wild food consumption (mainly fruits, leaves, and grasses). The health and nutrition status of IDPs is reportedly deteriorating, especially among the IDPs in SPLA-N controlled areas. The Federal Ministry of Health and WHO continue to monitor the provision of healthcare to accessible displaced populations in the major government-held towns of South Kordofan. The risk of communicable diseases is reported to be high in these areas. However, there has been little access to populations in the Nuba Mountains, where health and nutrition conditions are expected to be worse.

Typically, seasonal agricultural labor and sale of early maturing vegetables (e.g. okra, tomato, green maize, and watermelons) are the most important income sources during the Outlook period. However, this year fighting and insecurity will significantly limit access to seasonal labor, a vital income source for poor households within the area and for seasonal migrant laborers from North Kordofan, particularly during the harvest period.

Furthermore, given their displacement in extremely isolated areas, IDP populations inside the SPLM-N- held areas are expected to face severe access restrictions to food during the Outlook period. Currently, the Government of Sudan has restricted humanitarian organizations' access to these populations, and negotiations have had little effect to improve access. After November/December, fresh harvest and wild foods will no longer be available and harvested crops will quickly be depleted. Drinking water will become a problem after November when seasonal water pools and streams dry up. With the escalation in fighting expected as roads become more accessible during the dry season, more people are likely to move from the Nuba Mountains of South Kordofan to Unity and Upper Nile states in South Sudan, to urban SAF-controlled areas of South Kordofan, and to urban areas of Sudan, especially Khartoum and Al Obied (North Kordofan). In these locations, humanitarian assistance may be more feasible.

The projected poor harvest, the continuation of fighting, and lack of access to markets will have major negative impacts on household food security during the scenario period. Crisis levels of food insecurity are expected to persist until November/December. If fighting continues, and access by humanitarian agencies is denied to IDP populations in SPLA-N controlled areas who have exhausted food stocks and water sources, food security conditions could worsen to Emergency levels (IPC phase 4).

*Nomadic populations*

Fighting in South Kordofan (and in Blue Nile State) is also likely to impact the traditional seasonal north to south migration of nomadic cattle herders (e.g. Rezeigat, Misseriya, Falata, Kennana, Lahwein and Rufa'a), which starts in October. Also, South Sudan recently announced that it will close the border with Sudan beginning in December to prevent herder movements into the South. Over 10 million head of cattle from Sudan seasonally graze in South Sudan from November/December to June/July every year. Lack of access to these grazing lands will increase the concentration of animals in Sudan and risk of conflict between the nomadic tribes and sedentary farming communities in Sudan if animals destroy crops prior to harvest. Furthermore, the concentration of large herds in small areas is likely to lead to overgrazing and increased susceptibility to communicable diseases. This could cause deteriorating livestock body conditions and low off-takes.

Lack of access to grazing in South Sudan will also increase other tensions along the Sudan and South Sudan border. However, the recent agreement between Sudan and South Sudan to open the border for trade might ease the situation so

that Sudanese nomads may graze their animals in South Sudan.

In spite of difficulties in grazing, due to high demand for export and local consumption during the *Eid Al Adha* (pilgrimage festivals), livestock prices remained high and are expected to remain high during the Outlook period. Therefore, livestock/cereal terms of trade still favor livestock owners, and the majority of the nomadic populations are expected to remain food secure.

*Residents/host populations:*

The ongoing conflict affected a significant proportion of the population in South Kordofan, mainly in terms of restricted access to cultivation, seasonal agricultural labor and access to markets. Furthermore, hosting the IDP populations has placed a major burden on resident/host communities. Many traders have reportedly disposed their food stocks at low prices to avoid confiscation by the fighting parties. The main areas of concern are residents in the main areas of conflict (e.g. Talodi, Dellami, Al Buram, Heiban, Reif Ashargi, Julud, and the rest of the Nuba Mountains). Access to markets has been considerably reduced due to insecurity and restricted movement of civilians by the conflicting parties.

Over the course of the Outlook period, restricted access to harvests, sources of income, and markets, are expected to heighten food insecurity. Reduced flows of basic commodities (e.g. sugar, oil) to areas in conflict are expected to lead to sharply increased prices. Most households will cope by eating early maturing home garden crops, the small harvest of 2011, and wild foods.

Most resident/host communities in conflict-affected areas face Crisis levels of food insecurity, while those in less conflict-affected areas (e.g. parts of Abu Gebeiha, Abassiya and Habila) face Stressed levels. Given the expectation for increased fighting and restricted access by humanitarian agencies, food security levels are likely to deteriorate to Crisis and Emergency levels during January to March.

**Blue Nile State**

Fighting between the SPLA-N and SAF has been ongoing since September in all six localities of the state, affecting about 500,000 people (55 percent of the total population). Many of the displaced lost productive assets and food stocks. As in South Kordofan, IDP figures are difficult to estimate and verify, due to mobility restrictions and limited humanitarian access. SPLA-N has reported the displacement of 27,500 people from Baw and Tadamon localities to the south and west of Blue Nile State, and about 11,000 people from Kurmuk locality (the SPLA-N strong-hold) to the southern parts of the state. There are also reportedly about 30,000 refugees in Ethiopia and 4,000 refugees in Upper Nile state of South Sudan. The majority of the 100,000 residents of Ed Damazine and Roseries towns who fled to Sennar and Gezeira states during the first week of the conflict have returned, as the SAF took full control of these towns. However, new arrivals from Ed Damazine locality are also reported in Geissan locality. Considerable numbers of displaced people from rural areas are still in Ed Damazine town. As of the time of reporting, fighting progresses toward Kurmuk and Geissan in the south, and people have been displaced to communities outside of Kurmuk town where many are reported to be sleeping in the open.

Conflict began in the middle of the agricultural season, which has exacerbated the late start to the season. Many farmers and seasonal laborers fled their farms during the critical weeding time in September/October. Some government sources project that, on top of the far below-average area planted (because of the late start), an additional 20 percent of area planted will be affected by conflict. As in South Kordofan, the prevailing insecurity restricted access to important seasonal agricultural labor, a major income source at this time of year.

In September, the Government of Sudan announced a plan to assist 300,000 affected people in the government-controlled areas of Blue Nile state with food, health, nutrition, water, sanitation and non-food items (NFIs) for a period of three months beginning in October. The Sudanese Red Cross (SRC) in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) distributed NFIs and undertook limited assessments at eight locations in Ed Damazine town and adjacent areas. WHO reported that 86 percent of the total 88 health facilities in Tadamon, Ed Damazine and Roseries localities (SAF-controlled areas) are functioning, but only 21 percent of the 141 health facilities in Bau, Kurmuk and Geissan localities (mostly controlled by SPLA-N).

Government restrictions block access by all parties to IDPs in the SPLA-N controlled areas. Refugees in South Sudan and Ethiopia have been relying on food aid, the host community, and meager food stocks.

Crisis food security levels are likely to persist through November. Thereafter if fighting continues and access by humanitarian agencies continues to be denied, food security conditions for IDPs are likely to deteriorate to Emergency levels. The main areas of concern are parts of Kurmuk, Geissan and Bau localities. By the start of the dry season in November, more people are likely to flee to Ethiopia, Maban county of Upper Nile State (South Sudan) and urban areas (e.g. Ed Damazine town, Dindiro, Bau etc.) controlled by SAF, where assistance is currently being provided by the Government of Sudan.

For non-displaced populations, currently food stocks from the last year's good harvest and market purchase are the most important food sources for resident/host communities, and these populations face Stressed and Crisis levels of food insecurity. Food security in relatively stable areas (e.g. Al Tadamon locality) will likely improve during and immediately following the harvest if conflict does not extend to these areas. However, given the expectation for an early start to the lean season, food security conditions are likely to deteriorate to Stressed and Crisis levels early next year.

### **Darfur**

Despite relatively good rainfall performance in most parts of Darfur during August through September, a decline in reported violent incidents during the second half of the year, and the reported access to small plots of farmland by a considerable number of IDPs, food security concerns remain. These concerns include the poor harvests projected in localized parts of North, West and South Darfur; the sharp increase of food prices; and the recent alliance between the SPLA-N and main factions of Darfur rebels (the Sudan Liberation Movement-Mini Minawi - SLM-MM and Sudan Liberation Movement-Abdulwahid – (SLM-AW), and the move by the Justice and Equity Movement (JEM) leader from Libya to Darfur). These factors are expected to hinder the voluntary return of IDPs and constrain trade flows between central Sudan (the main source of non-cereal food supply) and Darfur.

Food aid and market purchases are the main food sources for the majority of IDPs during September/October, while own production is expected to become a more important source during the harvest and post-harvest period. Casual labor is the main source of income for the majority of poor resident households and IDPs in Darfur. Although free movement is restricted in many parts of Darfur due to the prevailing insecurity, the upcoming harvest season (the end of November 2011 – January 2012) is expected to improve access to agricultural labor within Darfur, which will improve income sources.

Lack of access to grazing in South Sudan may impact nomadic populations from Darfur. Recently, facilitated by the UN, about 7,000 Flata tribesmen with over 20,000 head of cattle returned from South Sudan to the Demso area in South Darfur. These groups have grazed their animals in South Sudan for decades, but were advised to return to Sudan after separation.

Improved access to food and seasonal agricultural labor for the majority of the 2 million IDPs across the three Darfur states is expected to improve food security from Crisis levels to Stressed levels during the harvest and post-harvest period (December to February). The 300,000 – 400,000 people in drought-prone areas and security hot spots (e.g. Sheriya, Khazan Jadid in South Darfur and rural El Fasher, Malha, Mellit and Dar Al Salam localities in North Darfur) are expected to face Stressed levels throughout the entire scenario period. However, the lean season is anticipated to start early, in March 2012, in most of North Darfur and some parts of South and West Darfur states due to expected high food prices, the high inflation rate, the likelihood of a poor harvest due to rainfall shortages in October (following good rainfall in August/September), and an outbreak of localized pests (e.g., grasshoppers, birds, millet head-worms and beetles).

### **Red Sea State**

In Red Sea State, the late start to the rains and below-average rainfall reduced pasture and water availability and affected the flooding of seasonal streams (wadis) for flood-retreat cultivation of sorghum. In Tokar locality, the flood-retreat cultivation on which most of the population depends has been negatively affected by low flooding this year. Typically the river of Tokar floods five times, but this year flooding only happened once. In addition, access to seasonal labor migration to semi-mechanized farming in neighboring Kassala and Gedaref states, an important source of food and income, has been reduced this year because of the poor rainy season. The lack of water and pasture has been an additional threat to the small herds of goats/sheep owned by some households. Currently, about 300,000 people in Red Sea State are food insecure, including 150,000 people in Tokar locality at Crisis levels, and the remainder at Stressed levels.

Market purchase is the main source of food for most people in Red Sea state throughout most of the year, and the sharp increase in prices (especially for staple foods) has severely affected access to food. In October 2011, the prices of cereal are more than double compared to what they were at the same time last year (SDG 80 per sack).

Current levels of food insecurity raise concerns for food security outcomes in the following lean season (April-September 2012), particularly if food assistance is not provided. Given the expectation for continued high prices, decreased income because of reduced labor opportunities, and the poor flood season in Tokar, food security levels are likely to deteriorate from Stressed to Crisis levels in Senkat locality but to remain Stressed in the rest of the State. Food assistance is currently provided only in the form of Food for Education (FFE), although the Government of Sudan recently announced pledges of food assistance to affected populations in Tokar.

### Abyei

In Abyei (the disputed territory), following the displacement of the majority of inhabitants after the heavy fighting in February/March 2011, the security situation has remained relatively calm since the deployment of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) in July 2011. In September 2011, flash floods resulting from heavy rains caused an additional hardship for both residents and the displaced population in Abyei Administration, resulting in cut off roads and widespread crop destruction. The most affected areas are Almuglad, Almayram and Alebab areas. An inter-agency mission in Agok and Twic Counties in Warrap state (South Sudan) reported that an estimated 5,000 to 10,000 IDPs from Abyei were once again displaced because of the flooding. Food prices remained at high levels in all markets in the area due to limited flows of commodities. However, there is an attempt by local leaders to achieve local peace agreements to reopen the main market in Abyei and improve access to markets before the end of October 2011.

Abyei will continue to remain a hot spot in the border of Sudan and South Sudan as both sides claim the territory. Given that the significant return of IDPs located in South Sudan is unlikely, even with the deployment of Ethiopian forces, current Crisis levels of food insecurity are likely to persist through the scenario period.

**Table I. Less likely events over the next six months that could change the above scenarios**

Area	Event	Impact on food security outcomes
South Kordofan State	Implementation of Addis Ababa agreement between GoS and SPLA-N	Improved security situation could lead to return of IDPs, but it would be too late to catch-up on the cultivation season
Abyei Area	Durable solution to Abyei status	Allow return of Abyei IDPs, but they will miss the ongoing cultivation season
Darfur (North, South and West Darfur States)	The remaining rebel groups sign peace deal with GoS	Improve the security situation allowing the return of IDPs to their home villages.
Blue Nile and South Kordofan States	Peace deal between SPLA-N and GoS to end violence in Blue Nile and South Kordofan States	Improve access by humanitarian agencies to provide humanitarian assistance and allow return of displaced people to their home villages.
All Sudan	Stop soaring of food prices	Improve access to food from markets